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PROGRAM:

EYEWITNESS NEWS

DATE:

JUNE 27, 1972

STATION OR NETWORK:

WTOP TELEVISION

TIME:

6:00 PM, EDT**CONGRESSMAN CHARGES CIA HELICOPTER PILOTS INVOLVED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING**

BOB DALTON: Democratic Congressman Les Aspin of Wisconsin charged today that American pilots, flying CIA operated helicopters, have been smuggling opium inside Laos. Well, Aspin is asking CIA Director Richard Helms to investigate and report back to Congress. WTOP's Capitol Hill correspondent Carolyn Lewis reports.

CAROLYN LEWIS: Aspin says he has substantial new evidence that the CIA is involved in the illegal drug market. According to a Yale University specialist, Alfred McCoy, opium has been transported out of Laotian villages by CIA aircraft to villages where it was refined into morphine and heroin.

CONGRESSMAN LES ASPIN: ...we have indicates, is, at least as far as some CIA pilots in Southeast Asia are concerned, they are involved in helping with the drug traffic, getting opium out of Laos into a position where they can be changed, manufactured into heroin, and then into a position where they enter into the drug traffic in the United States.

LEWIS: What's the source of your information?

ASPIN: We have it from a person who is an expert in Southeast Asia, who spent a lot of time studying the problem of drugs in Southeast Asia, and is writing a book on it.

LEWIS: Congressman, what would be in it for the CIA?

ASPIN: Well, nothing as an institution, but I'm sure what would be in it for the individual people who are involved in it, if they are indeed proved to be involved in it, would be money. The drug traffic is a very lucrative business, and what you would need would be a couple of people acting completely on their own, of course. It's not the CIA as an organization, but members of the CIA could very easily be involved in this to their own personal financial gain.

LEWIS: Aspin says he has asked the CIA Director to find

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out at what level CIA officials are aware of the illegal drug trafficking. The Congressman also charges that administration officials have, in his words, been covering up the extent of heroin trafficking in Southeast Asia. Carolyn Lewis, Eyewitness News.

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